

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2252

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 1144

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, GT

SUBJECT: REVOLUTIONARY PARTY PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE PAIZ

NOVALES DISCUSSES THE CAMPAIGN

SUMMARY: IN FEBRUARY 25 LUNCHEON MEETING WITH
AMBASSADOR, REVOLUTIONARY PARTY PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE
PAIZ NOVALES EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE HE WOULD WIN
MARCH 3 ELECTIONS IF THEY ARE FAIR, AND SAID HE HAD
VISITED GOVERNMENT COALITION CANDIDATE THAT MORNING
TO PROTEST WHAT HE BELIEVED TO BE PLANS FOR GROSS
GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL FRAUD AND WARNED WOULD PROTEST PUBLICLY IF
SUCH FRAUD OCCURRED. LAUGERUD REPORTEDLY ASSERTED HE
KNEW OF NO FRUAD PLANS, THAT THEY MUST HAVE BEEN WORK
OF MLN LEADERS, AND THAT HE WOULD TAKE STEPS TO HAVE
ANY SUCH PLANS CANCELLED. OPPOSITION FRONT CANDIDATE
RIOS MONTT IS MAKING HEATED PUBLIC ACCUSATIONS
OF FRUAD, BUT PAIZ'S PRIVATE INTERVENTION MAY WELL
BE MORE EFFECTIVE IN HOLDING IT DOWN-IF IN FACT
FRAUD IS HELD TO A RELATIVE MINIMUM. END SUMMARY.

1. IN HIS FIRST MEETING WITH THE AMBASSADOR, AT A
LUNCHEON ALSO ATTENDED BY DCM AND CHIEF POLITICAL
SECTION, PAIZ WAS BRIMMING WITH CONFIDENCE(AS HE
HAS BEEN IN HIS LAST SEVERAL MEETINGS WITH EMBASSY
OFFICERS) THAT HE WILL WIN THE MARCH 3 ELECTIONS IF
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THEY ARE FAIR. HE SAID THAT HE WAS ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN

FROM THE RECEPTION HE RECEIVED ON HIS CAMPAIGN TRIPS THAT HE WAS BEING MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE THAN HIS RIVALS IN CONVINCING THE PEOPLE HE WAS THE MAN BEST SUITED FOR THE PRESIDENCY.

2. PAIZ SAID THAT HE HAD JUST REVIEWED INFORMATION FROM UNIMPEACHABLE SOURCES THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS PLANNING TO PERPETRATE MASSIVE FRAUD IN THE ELECTIONS BY STUFFING BALLOT BOXES, ETC. HE PRODUCED AN UNSIGNED LETTER FROM AN ALLEGEDLY HIGH GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE DETAILING TYPES OF FRAUD BEING PLANNED BY MLN LEADERS MARIO SANDOVAL (THE COALITION VICE-PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE) AND ROBERTO HERRERA (PRESENT MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT). HE HAD ALSO HAD CONFIRMATION OF THESE PLANS FROM A FRIEND IN SALAMA (BAJA VERAPAZ DEPARTMENT), WHO HAD RECEIVED FRAUD INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE DEFECTING FROM THE MLN TO THE PR. PAIZ SAID THAT HE HAD GONE TO HIS OLD FRIEND AND CURRENT RIVAL, GENERAL KJELL LAUGERUD, THAT VERY MORNING TO WARN HIM THAT IF THE GOVERNMENT GOES THROUGH WITH ITS FRAUD PLANS, THERE WOULD BE SERIOUS TROUBLE. THE PEOPLE WOULD NOT ACCEPT THIS TYPE OF ACTION QUIETLY, AND HE, PAIZ, WOULD HAVE TO DENOUNCE LAUGERUD PUBLICLY IF PLANS FOR FRAUD ARE CARRIED OUT. PAIZ SAID HE TOLD LAUGERUD THAT HE HAD COME TO HIM PERSONALLY INSTEAD OF GOING TO THE PRESS BECAUSE HE WAS SURE THAT LAUGERUD, WHO HAD ALWAYS BEEN AN HONORABLE MAN, DID NOT WANT TO WIN BY FRAUD, AND HE DID NOT WANT TO HURT LAUGERUD'S REPUTATION. LAUGERUD REPORTEDLY REPLIED THAT HE DID NOT KNOW OF THE PLANNED FRAUD, WHICH MUST HAVE BEEN THE WORK OF MLN LEADERS. LAUGERUD SAID THAT HE WAS HAVING A MEETING WITH HIS CAMPAIGN STAFF THAT VERY EVENING AND THAT HE WOULD INSTRUCT THEM TO FORGET THEIR PLANS FOR FRAUD BECAUSE HE DID NOT WANT TO BECOME PRESIDENT VIA FOUL MEANS. PAIZ TOLD LAUGERUD THAT HE WAS SURE HIS FORMER PUPIL DID NOT WANT TO SULLY HIS HANDS BY BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR THROWING THE COUNTRY INTO CHAOS, AND WARNED THAT THE TENSIONS WHICH WOULD BE BROUGHT ON BY FRAUD COULD LEAD TO A NEW WAVE OF VIOLENCE AND GUERRILLA ACTIVITY. LATER IN THE CONVERSATION PAIZ NOTED THAT HE WAS WAITING FOR

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HIS FINAL CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTION OF \$25,000 WHICH HE INTENDED TO USE TO PAY FOR 3,000 PR PARTY STALWARTS TO WATCH THE ELECTION TABLES.

3. IN A DISCUSSION OF AGRARIAN REFORM, AND THE MEANS HE WOULD USE TO COMBAT INFLATION AND THE HIGH COST OF LIVING WERE HE TO TAKE OFFICE, PAIZ ONCE AGAIN REVEALED THAT ECONOMICS IS NOT HIS FORTE.

4. ASKED WHETHER HE HAD DECIDED ON HIS CABINET, PAIZ SAID THAT GENERAL JUVENTINO GOMEZ RECINOS WOULD BE HIS MINISTER OF DEFENSE IF HE WINS. HE IS THINKING OF FRANCISCO VILLAGRAN KRAMER AS A POSSIBLE FOREIGN MINISTER, AND WOULD OFFER A CABINET POST TO CARLOS ENRIQUE PERALTA MENDEZ, WHO HAD SERVED AS MINISTER OF ECONOMY DURING THE REIGN OF COL. ENRIQUE PERALTA AZURDIA. HE WILL LOOK FOR OUTSTANDING MEN OF VARIOUS POLITICAL BELIEFS FOR HIS CABINET, AND WOULD NOT CHOOSE THEM FROM THE RANK AND FILE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY WHICH HE SAID DID NOT OFFER MUCH.

5. PAIZ SAID THAT THE FINANCING FOR HIS CAMPAIGN HAD COME PRINCIPALLY FROM MAURICIO SACA AND A VILLIAR(PH) WHO ARE WEALTHY MEN.

6. AS IN PAST CONVERSATIONS, PAIZ PRAISED LAUGERUD, AND EXPRESSED WORRY ABOUT RIOS, WHO HE DESCRIBED AS A "RARE," IMPLUSIVE TYPE, BUT DEFINITELY NOT A COMMUNIST. HE SAID THAT HE WORRIED ABOUT THE PEOPLE AROUND RIOS, WHOM HE BELIEVED HAD DANGEROUS LEFTIST VIEWS. HE DESCRIBED FUENTES MOHR AS AN OPPORTUNIST WHO WOULD MAKE A DEAL WITH ANYONE TO BE ABLE TO PUT HIS VIEWS INTO EFFECT, BUT STOPPED SHORT OF LABELING HIM A COMMUNIST. AS THE CONVERSTION DREW TO A CLOSE, PAIZ WAS SHARPLY CRITICAL OF THE ARANA ADMINISTRATION FOR WHAT HE TERMED A LACK OF ACCOMPLISHMENT AND ITS USE OF PRMISSIVENESS TOWARDS VIOLENCE.

7. COMMENT: WE HAVE SOME DOUBT THAT PAIZ ACTUALLY VISITED LAUGERUD, BUT FEEL SURE THAT HE DID TALK WITH HIM ABOUT FRAUD, EITHER VIA TELEPHONE OR THROUGH CONFIDENTIAL

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AN INTERMEDIARY. WE HAVE NOT DOUBT THAT THE GOVERNMENT COALITION IS PLANNING SOME FRAUD AND BELIEVE THAT LAUGERUD MUST BE AT LEAST OBLIQUELY AWARE OF IT. OPPOSITION FRONT CANDIDATE RIOS MONTT IS MAKING HEATED, POINTED PUBLIC ACCUSATIONS OF IT. IT MAY WELL BE THAT PAIZ'S PRIVATE INTERVENTION WILL BE MORE EFFECTIVE THAN RIOS' PUBLIC ACCUSATIONS IN HOLDING DOWN THE FRAUD--IF, IN FACT, FRAUD IS HELD TO A RELATIVE MINIMUM. MELOY

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